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light a new one, and everyone will take from it embers to kindle his own fire in the different huts. It is one of the conditions of the purification of the village.

The same day young people are sent to all the relatives in the neighbourhood to announce the death. Even the relations who are absent far away, in Johannesburg, must be informed; this is done in the following way. Someone takes a handful of grass, lights it and, when it is on fire, throws it in the direction of the absent one, saying: "Your brother, here, is dead. Do not fear. May your enemies (viz. your white employers) have consideration and love for you, that you may find sleep and health."

II. *The grave.*

764 The men of the village then go out to dig the grave. They choose a place behind the hut of the deceased or somewhere further off in the little forest which generally surrounds the village; or in the *ntimu*, the sacred wood, if he were one of the guardians of the forest (1), one belonging to the elder branch of the family.

First of all the diggers see that a tree is near the grave on which to hang some of the belongings of the deceased (those which will be kept but will have to be purified); they dig a hole of about six feet in length, four in width, and two and half or three deep. This first hole can be dug with ordinary hoes. Then, at the side of it, they excavate a second hole, more or less circular in form, using for this a light wooden board, generally the rim of an old basket. The sides of the hole are well smoothed by means of this instrument. In the Northern clans they sometimes smear it with mud taken from the river; they also put a reed beside the corpse, and grass, which grew in water, is spread at the bottom of the grave (2). So the grave, is in a way, double. It presents

(1) In the Southern clans the grave of the husband or the wife is dug in front of the hut in which they were living (as this hut is to be abandoned); in the case of a child, he will be buried at the side of the hut (as, in this case, the hut will not be destroyed.) The grave is surrounded by a fence made of sticks and plastered with clay. Thus people will remember where the corpse has been buried.

(2) Compare this custom with the rite of burying little children and twins in wet soil.

C. SUNDRY COURT CUSTOMS

644 The paraphernalia of royalty are very modest in the Thonga courts. However there are some to be mentioned in addition to the regalia which I have described.

I. *The Big Drum* (Muntshintshi).

644 534 237 This is found in every capital, even sometimes in the sub-chief's villages. It is made of a hollowed stem, somewhat like an ordinary mortar; or it may be rounded, and even provided with three legs, as in Nondwane; a piece of skin is stretched over the opening. This may be the skin of an elephant's ear, of a buffalo, of an ox or of an antelope *mangulwe*. This instrument is subject to some taboos; when the skin cracks, it is forbidden to look inside. There is something mysterious about it and nobody must disclose that mystery. People say that a bullet is introduced into it when it is made. In Shiluvane they asserted that the skull of the hostile chief, Sikororo, killed in the battle of Nov. 1901, had been put into the big drum! At any rate, there is a special individual who is summoned to repair it and he receives a fowl as reward.

644 534 731 202 The big drum is beaten on various occasions:

a) To announce a great fatality, especially the death of a chief, or the day of the publication of the mourning; also the approach of the inundation, when the Nkomati river rises, in January or February, and threatens to cover the whole land; again when the bush fire threatens to destroy the capital.

b) To summon warriors to the capital in case of imminent war.

644 534 c) To execute various musical performances. The big drum leads a special dance (nkino), which takes place at the capital during the winter, when the harvest is ended, and the country happy and prosperous. It is accompanied by a smaller drum (shikolombane) which is called the "son" of the big one. The

1: Junod M-5 (1895-1909)1927 Thonga

III. *The shipalapala.*

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Speaking of the musical instruments of the Court, I must also mention *the trumpet of assembly, shipalapala,* which is the recognised means of summoning the subjects to the capital. The sound of the big drum, though heard at a great distance, cannot reach to the confines of the country. So, when the chief wants his men to assemble at once, he uses the *shipalapala.* This is a horn of mhalamhala, or of nyala or of phifa antelope, the sound of which is like mpu-ù-u (with an accent on the second syllable). The envoy of the chief runs to the capital of a sub-chief, blowing all the time. When he has reached that village, he transmits his message and a young man starts at once with the shipalapala of the sub-chief to another district. So, in a short time, notice is given to the whole tribe to assemble.

IV. *Visitors.*

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When a stranger passes through the capital, he must sit down outside the central square and at some little distance from it. Some one will come and inquire what he wants ; he replies : "I come from such and such a country, and I wish to pay my respects to the chief." Then the counsellor or "Agent General" charged with the affairs of the traveller's country will come and converse with him and announce him (bika) to the chief, who will receive him affably and possibly assign him a hut to sleep in, in case he wishes to stay the night, at the same time providing him with food. Should the chief be particularly well disposed towards his guest, he will kill a calf or even an ox for him ; and he, on his return, will speak in praise of the hospitality he has received, saying : "The chief made me share his reign," literally : "He made me reign, (a ndji fumisile)." Such is the procedure when the respective countries of guest and host are adjoining and the tribes

on good and friendly terms. Should relations between them be at all strained, or should war be imminent, all the roads would be closed and no one allowed to enter the capital.

V. *The Kondza custom.*

The chief is also approached by those who may wish to become subject to him, to be naturalized ; this is called *kondza*, from a Zulu word conveying this meaning. The chief will assign to the new *nandja* a dwelling place, and he will be incorporated in the nation without further ceremony. By this kondza, he binds himself to pay the taxes (See the story of Mutipi. *Les chants et les contes des Ba-Ronga*, page 164).

Naturalised strangers, however, do not eat the first fruits (luma) with the same drug as the people of the country. They have their own medicine and take it according to their own rules. They are however forbidden to luma before the chief of their adopted land (p. 397).

VI. *Diplomatic relations.*

We have seen that these are very carefully conducted, each of the neighbouring clans having one counsellor entrusted with the care of its affairs. In case of war, friendly clans frequently make alliances (shinakulobye). They send messages to each other, or they have special means of communicating news in case of war. Supposing, for instance, Nwamba and Nondwane should fight against Matjolo. They put two traps at their common boundary, on the side of the road, one on the territory of Nwamba and one on that of Nondwane. These traps consist of a rod bent by a string fastened to the ground. Should the army of Matjolo have made an invasion during the night into Nwamba territory and put the people to flight, the men of Nwamba

202/726 will at once go and undo the trap which is on their side ; in the morning, the people of Nondwane will know that they must also fly.

D. THE TRIBUNAL OF THE CHIEF.

642 In the Thonga Court there is no separation of powers. The legislative, executive, and judicial powers are all in the hands of the chief, aided by his counsellors. The chief is the supreme authority and his decisions are without appeal.

1. *Legislative affairs.*

671 The *chief* makes the laws (p. 382) and presides at discussions
643 which end in a resolution. But his counsellors assist him.
583 Here is an example of such a decision taken at Maphunga's court. There was no uniformity as to the money to be paid for a lobolo, and some fathers claimed as much as £ 20 or £ 30 for their daughters. The great counsellors of the capital decided (tjimba mhaka, viz., to tie the matter) that a lobolo should be £ 15.10 as the maximum. They "tied the matter" with the assent of the chief. Then all the sub-chiefs and counsellors were summoned to the capital. The chief called the roll to ascertain if they were all present. The great counsellor then said to the assembly : "The herds which people claim are too large. Have you gold mines and do you know how to make coins ? Henceforth do not lobola with too much money. £ 15.10 is quite enough!" Every sub-chief, on his return home, called his men and informed them of the decision : "Hi to timhaka! Such are the matters!" said they. The subjects were disappointed. They wept! But they had to accept the decision. To oppose it is taboo! "Psa yila!"

643 A *native debate* or discussion is conducted on very different
645 lines from those to which we are generally accustomed, nothing
671 ever being put to the vote. The chief presides. A proposition is

685 721 *Theft* (ku yiba) is universally condemned, not so much for its immoral character as for the fact that it renders a normal social life impossible. The notion of *individual property*, though it is not developed as in more civilised nations, is nevertheless at the base of the whole Bantu system. The Bantus are agriculturists. They believe that the products of their labour belong to them and that no one else is entitled to appropriate them. The notion of property is in direct relation to work accomplished. (Compare Part IV.)

685 574 202 To steal growing mealies is not usual. A thief breaks off the cob, whilst the master of the field first uproots the stalk and then takes the cobs. If a friend of his who happens to be travelling passes through his gardens and wants to eat a cob, he is quite welcome to do so. He also uproots the stalk, puts it on one side of the road or leans it against a tree and draws a line on the ground from the place where the stalk grew to the spot where he has put it. Perhaps the owner of the field will discover the uprooted stalk after a whole month. If he inquires who has helped himself to his mealies, his friend will say to him : "Did you not see the line ?" And they will laugh over it (hlekelelana). A thief acting hastily would not have had time to draw the line!

685 789 There are certain magical drugs with which people smear mealie stalks (see Part IV) and they assert that, if any one tries to penetrate into their garden to steal, he will have his hand caught and will not be able to get rid of the plant! For some reason or another, these magical methods do not always work. So the injured person has recourse to the tribunal.

685 343 Should the thief be caught in the very act, there is no difficulty! His own field will be taken by the owner of the stolen mealies and he will have to pay a fine of one ox, otherwise the matter will be brought before the Court, and the only difference will be that the fine will be of two or three oxen, one of which will remain in the hands of the chief. (Mankhelu.) If the thief has been clever enough to avoid being caught, if he has stolen from a store hut, Natives are clever detectives and he will probably be discovered. These store huts are generally built in the middle of the field, or in the little bush which surrounds the village ; the grass all around

714 in the Chaka army were distinguished by differently coloured shields.) On either side of the central line, from top to bottom, two parallel rows of small square incisions are made (magabela) through which are run strips of hide of a different colour, the effect being a series of oblongs. By an ingenious device the ends of these strips are so tied at the back of the shield as to form several sheath-like nooses into which is inserted the stick by which it is held. The space between the two lines of oblongs is called the back (nhlana) of the shield. The nooses or sheaths are four or six in number : two or three at the top, and two or three at the bottom, a space being left in the middle, where the warrior grasps the stick. This stick tends to strengthen the shield, but, being merely passed through the nooses, it acts also as a pivot around which it can turn ; it is this pivoting action which gives to the shield its chief value as a protection. An assagai (usually thrown with considerable strength) would easily penetrate the ox-hide, but when it strikes the shield, the force of the impact causes it to pivot and the weapon is deflected to one side: should it strike exactly in the middle, it would hit the stick, break it and lose all further impetus. It is hardly necessary to add that the *shitlhangu* of the South African Black is absolutely useless when opposed to bullets ; it was invented to protect the warrior against the dreaded assagai, at a time when firearms were not yet thought of!

713 177 During the last century the Ba-Ronga have begun to use guns for hunting and also for war. Although the sale of firearms to the Natives has often been prohibited, the Ba-Ronga were reported to possess several hundreds of rifles at the commencement of the 1894 war, and also to be fairly proficient in their use... very different from the Madagascans, who removed the sights from their rifles on the score that they were in the way when taking aim!

C. THE MOBILISATION OF THE ARMY.

202 726 643 In the Zihlahla country, when the chief wished to muster his forces, he did so by means of the *shipalapala*, the rudimentary trumpet which I described in the preceding chapter. A swift

202 messenger (shigidjimi) ran from village to village, blowing this
726 instrument ; when he was tired he passed it on to some other
643 good runner, who carried the summons further afield ; he ran and ran until he was exhausted, when he handed the trumpet to a third, and so on until the whole country had been covered.

At the sound of the well-known call of the shipalapala, the warriors shout : "A hi hlomen!" — "to arms!" They at once put on their war costumes and repair to the capital.

In Nondwane all the sub-chiefs possessed their shipalapala, and each of them summoned his own people. There the shipalapala mostly sounded to call for dances and for feasts. When the army was mobilised merely to discuss matters quietly, messengers ran through the country shouting : "Mayivonule!" — "take the shields!"..., to which the warriors answered : "A hi hlomen!" — "to arms!" The messenger had to go quickly. "He did not lose time in grinding tobacco ;" he only indicated the time when the army was expected in the capital.

Should matters be more serious, should a hostile yimpi have invaded the territory, every one can give the alarm (tlhabela mukhosi), shouting : "Yi ngeeneeeeeee!" "It has entered!" (viz., the hostile army has invaded our territory). All the women flee away and the men run to the capital.

D. THE MUKHUMBI, THE CIRCLE OF WARRIORS.

643 Decked out like wild animals, the warriors hasten with all
701 speed to the chief's village, where the regiments muster. The
726 army (1) is divided into a certain number of *battalions*, *mabotshu*, or *meboko*, all men of about the same age forming a *botshu*. The *botshu* itself is made up of several *companies*, *mitlawa* or *mabandla*, and may therefore vary very much in numbers.

(1) Yimpi (pl. tiyimpi) in Thonga corresponds to impi in Zulu.

701 726 In the army of Matjolo there were nine battalions, commencing with that composed of youths from sixteen to twenty years old, up to that of "crown men" (makehla) and the grey beards who where still capable of handling an assagai; for every able-bodied man is a soldier and makes it a point of honour to join the army when it is mobilised. In the Zihlahla clan, the battalions of young men were called *Megajlela* and also *Ndumakazulu*, "the one who is celebrated as far as Zululand," surname of the chief Ñwamantibyane. After them came the *Nyonibovu*, *Giva*, *Malwabo*, *Djanungwana*.

Mankhelu, the Commander of the Nkuna yimpi, gave me the names of his battalions and the explanation of them. The old men formed the regiment called *Mamphondo*, those of the horns. Some of them used to tie a horn on their foreheads; they imitated the rhinoceros or the buffalo. The following regiment was the *Mamphisi* (timhisi), the hyenas; then the *Machoni*, the sea birds, a kind of duck, very swift; then the *Timbuluane*, a sort of lynx, the *Mafakubi*, representing the ndakazi antelope and, lastly, the most numerous regiment, the *Dhlanazo*, "those who eat with others (dya na bu)." Each regiment has, as we shall see, its own war-cry, in which it imitates the animal whose name it bears.

701 726 202 When all have reached the capital the first procedure is the "formation of the circle," in Thonga *biya mukhumbi*, to fence the circle or *aka mukhumbi*, to build the circle. This is accomplished in the Zihlahla army by a special summons which I might call "the order to fall in." Heralds scatter in all directions, enter the huts, approach the groups encamped around the capital, and shout in a high and monotonous key the following Zulu words. It will be noticed that the formula given is that which was made use of by the heralds in the Mpfumo clan during the war of 1894.

Irwana! Otyo adjalo, Mavela. (1)
Be nga n'thandi ba ka Nkupane,
Uuta'ka Sihlahle, enkulu si ka Hamule,
Malobola ge dyuse e bulandla ka Mbukwana.

(1) Mavela, the Zulu surname for Nwamantibyane.

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Listen! This is what Nwamantibyane says,
He whom the people of Nkupane do not love. (1)
The son of the Great Forest (Sibhlahla) of Hamule, (2)
He who took a wife and used the sword in the country of
his parents-in-law, in Mbukwane's country.

Gavalagwala a likova,
Ilihlongo ngo kubekeka,
Umpathi wa sibamo,
U za ku debula Mangole ni Maputukiri.

The royal bird with red plumage (3),
Magnificent to contemplate,
He who holds in his hand a gun
With which he will fire on the Angolese and the Portuguese.

Nduma kati, lo wa khiti,
Mo nga nguilwana,
U ti ka : a yi fumule!

He whose fame spreads afar, our chief,
Who is as a wild beast,
It is he who says: "To arms!".

701 726 This final exclamation, prolonged and finishing abruptly on the last syllable, carries a long distance; all the warriors jump to their feet and, brandishing their assagais and shields, run to the chief's village, where the circle is to be formed. Each

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(1) The people of Nkupane are one of the younger branches of the royal family of Mpfumo. They lived close to Lourenço Marques, on the other slope of the hill, to the West of the town. They would have liked undoubtedly, in common with many others, to assert their independence by throwing off the yoke of the elder branch, and even attempted to do so when Mahombole tried, in 1867 or in 1869, to overthrow Zihlahla. But the elder branch, whose chiefs were energetic men, succeeded in maintaining its authority over the whole clan. The fact that the people of Nkupane "do not love" Nwamantibyane redounds rather to the credit of the latter.

(2) Nwamantibyane's father was Zihlahla, his grandfather was Hamule. Sihlahla, or Zihlahla, in Zulu means forest, hence the herald's play on the word. The reign of Zihlahla, which we may place at from 1867 to 1883, was very troubled, at least during its first few years. The young chief, on his return from Natal, after the death of his father Hamule, married Mbilwana, a princess of the royal family of Mabota. During the bloody wars then raging, Zihlahla was angry with Mabota (whose chief was Mbukwana), for playing him false, and, one fine day, he made a raid into the country of his parents-in-law, killing many people. To have thus treated his "bakoswana," who are ordinarily held in such great respect, (see Part II) was a proof of valour which is remembered to this day, more than fifty years after the event. It must be said that, after this exploit, Zihlahla left his residence near the town and took refuge in the Nwamba territory; the Whites with whom he was fighting put in his place a certain Nwayeye whose name we shall find in a war song to which we shall have occasion to refer later on.

(3) The nkulunkulu is a bird which is shot in the forest on the borders of the Nkomati; its feathers are red, and only chiefs are allowed to wear them.

When the hunter has chosen, amongst all the prints, those which seem to him the freshest, he follows them up with his dogs, and there is some chance of his being able to overtake the antelope. Should he succeed in killing the animal without having received help from others he can appropriate it without rewarding anybody. Only if it is too heavy to carry home, he will shout loudly, on a high, piercing note: "Hoooooyiooo..." perhaps after having climbed up a tree so as to make himself heard a long way off. Or he will cut off the tail, cover the beast with branches to prevent vultures from damaging it, plant his assegay in the ground to show his right to the possession of his victim and go home to fetch his companions. When they have helped him to carry the animal, he will give each of them a good piece of meat. 224 476

But if the hunter who discovered the antelope sees that he will not be able to come up with it, he will blow his trumpet (lihlanga) to call for help. When the men arrive on the spot, he will cry: "Nkuna yowee!.." if he is a Nkuna, and all will repeat after him: "Nkuna yowee!.." to acknowledge his right. He may abandon the pursuit, but his right has been proclaimed and will be remembered. The second hunter who stabs the antelope will do the same; he will shout "Mabota yowee!.." if he is of the Mabota clan, and so on till the animal has been killed. Then the meat will be distributed amongst the killers in the following way.. The first will receive the body, the second one leg, the third the foreleg and the fourth the throat, a portion being reserved for the chief, the owner of the soil on which the antelope has fallen. This manner of pursuing an animal, in which helpers are summoned by means of the trumpet, is called ku nyikanana, i. e. to surrender to each other. 202 ● 224 476

If the hunter has killed a very big animal and wants his clansmen alone to help him, he has recourse to another method of calling them. Each clan possesses its own rallying cry, and this he shouts loudly. This is intended to exclude men of other clans and to prevent fighting or any dispute about the possession of the animal. For the Ba-Nkuna this cry is: *Nyandlaleyo*! For the Tsungus: *Hi nhlanga*! For the Manukosi clan: *Muyamba ngwenya ya namba wa tingwenya*! (Crocodile of the river of 224 202 618

202 618 crocodiles.) For the Mavundjas: *Kahlamba ntjhaba yo nonoha!* (The big mountain, difficult to climb.) (1)

224 643 825 845 I have already described the part of a slain animal which is to be given to the chief, when speaking of the prerogatives of the master of the country (I. p. 406). Here are some supplementary details: The general idea is that he must receive that part of the body which was in contact with the soil, because the chief is the owner of the soil. In the case of smaller antelopes however he does not claim anything. For the eland he requires, in addition to the ordinary tribute, half of the *bofu* i. e. of the paunch of fat which is found round the heart of this animal and which is believed to possess precious medicinal properties (especially for new-born children born with a membrane round the head). As regards buffaloes and other big animals, should they be killed far away from home, their meat is cut into strips (misha-katsu) and two bundles are brought back to the chief; it is also the rule that the head of any beast of great size should be eaten on the bandla, the meeting-place of the men in the capital.

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Buffalo hunter with his victim.

224 824 So far I have described hunting with assegais, sticks and dogs. But Thongas possess another method of killing big animals, a method which is perhaps more ancient and which has sometimes proved very useful. This is the *marindji trap*, i. e. a large pit dug in the earth, covered with branches and full of pointed stakes upon which the animal falls and impales itself. These stakes are made

(1) The Pedis have the same custom. The Ba-Khaha cry: "Haratsha! Mugoni! We"! This expression comes from the verb *ratsha*, to cross a river on a tree trunk, as the Khaha clan is said to have been held back in its ancient migrations by a swollen river and to have *ratsha* it successfully. The remembrance of this feat of their ancestors has remained and has given rise to this rallying cry. Other Pedis say: *'Sloandja khomo,"* viz., "the killer will be given an ox for his reward."

low, the fish is imprisoned between the reeds and the bank. 226
The construction of this trap is governed by strict law[illegible] 834
sexual relation is allowed during the five or six weeks [illegible]
fishing. The owner of the shibaba must cut the first reed.
Women must not approach the spot. On the day of inauguration
there is also a luma ceremony similar to that for the nhangu.

But the most curious fishing custom is the *tjeba*. "Ku tjeba" 226
means to kill fish in company in lakes which are drying up.
At the end of the winter most of the small lakes scattered all
over Thongaland, get smaller on account of the drought, and the
fish they contain, consisting mostly of carp and barbel, are obliged
to congregate in much smaller spaces. Natives take advantage
of this and the whole country-side is summoned to go and tjeba,
on a certain day, as it is important to be as numerous as possible
in order to ensure success. The chief orders all his men to make
shiranga, a kind of conical basket, a foot and a half high, whose
upper end is open and wide enough to admit the hand. The
shiranga must be very strong ; the tree used for the purpose is
called ntjangari. When the shiranga are ready, a messenger is 202
sent to all the villages, crying : 226
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Kho ! Khoooo ! Hobe ! Hobeee ! U yala nsateeee ! Na nsati a randja
nyamooo ! A randja mihlubeee ! Kho ! Hobe !
You hate your wife ! Your wife also is fond of flesh food ! She is
fond of the flesh of the tail of fishes !

Every male member of the tribe must answer to this summons
by going to the shore. Should he refuse the call, he is blamed and
despised, and his companions will sing to him a mocking song :

U yala ku tjeba, nyanhwaku !
You refuse to fish, nyanhwaku (1).

In the evening his wife will scold him, on seeing that he brings
no fish home! She will punish him by giving him mealie pap
without any sauce!

Before the throng enters the lake, someone must *make an* 226
offering ; he must be a descendant of the inhabitants of the country, 782

(1) Nyanhwaku is a formula of insult (I. p. 445).